



STATE SENATOR

NORMA CHAMPION

CAPITOL UPDATE 2006



Committees & Boards

Chair, Senate Committee on Aging, Families, Mental and Public Health

Vice-Chair, Senate Committee on Education

Four-year Member, Senate Appropriations Committee

Senate Ways and Means Committee

Chair, Senate Interim Committee on Adoption Promotion and Child Support Enforcement

Missouri Film Commission

Division of Medical Services, Medical and Technical Advisory Committee

Dear Friends,

Missouri is on the Move! After several years of poor economic and revenue growth, we are beginning to see positive signs in regard to job growth and increased revenue for the state. This has allowed the Legislature to move forward on several initiatives, including a significant increase in state funding for the Springfield R-12 school district of \$2,238,079 and an additional \$1.7 million in funding for Missouri State University.

This year, the Legislature tackled several important issues including:

- Eminent Domain
- Jessica's Law Relating to Child Predators
- Campaign Finance and Ethics Reform
- Funding of Utilicare for Needy Missourians
- Improvements for Small Business Insurance Pools
- Voting Reforms

The passage of Senate Bill 1229 was one of my personal highlights this session. This legislation passed unanimously in both the Senate and the House of Representatives and will provide tax credits for those donating to Child Advocacy Centers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and Children's Crisis Nurseries. No new tax dollars are required, yet this initiative is projected to increase donations to these vital organizations by \$2.8 million.

I am so pleased that we have been able to move Missouri forward without new taxes. It is my personal desire that we keep state government as small as possible, while assuring that Missourians are receiving reasonable services and our schools are adequately funded.

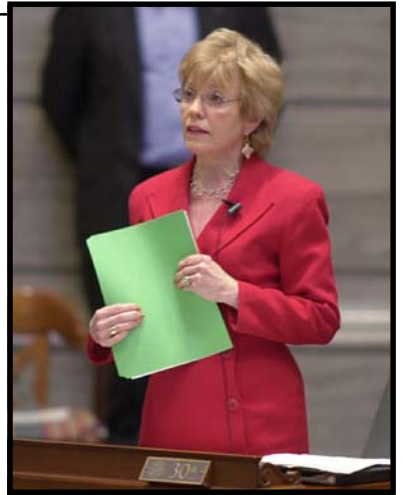
This past session, I was honored to once again serve on the Senate Appropriations Committee. We are constantly challenged to find the best use for our state dollars. I'm very mindful of Springfield's needs, and elsewhere in this newsletter you will see some of the results.

Please know that I welcome your input, and always feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,



(Please see back page for contact information.)



"For several years, our best advertising for the SMS/MSU name change was our students and the professionalism they displayed in appearance and conversation. I am pleased to see this fine reputation continue as we pursue even greater things for higher education in Missouri." – Senator Norma Champion



Col. Roger Stottlemeyer of the Missouri State Highway Patrol; Greene County Sheriff Jack Merritt; Cpt. Stephen J. Hinesly, director of the Missouri State Highway Patrol Crime Labs; Springfield Police Chief Lynn Rowe; and Bill Marbaker, assistant director of the State Crime Labs, join with Sen. Champion in celebrating the funding that will expand the Springfield lab into a full-service crime lab.

Senate Bill 1229: Help for Children in Crisis

The passage of Senate Bill 1229 was one of my proudest moments this session. This legislation establishes the "Children in Crisis" tax credit. Without using any new state funds, these tax credits can assist agencies that are on the front lines working with children, who, through no fault of their own, are in crisis.

When I discovered that approximately \$1.4 million in tax credits for special needs adoptions in Missouri went unused last year, I could not find any more deserving recipients than Child Advocacy Centers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and Children's Crisis Nurseries.

**Children
in Crisis**

The impact of SB 1229 is a wonderful opportunity for a public-private partnership in providing much-needed finances for these organizations that are significantly volunteer based.

This legislation provides a donor to any of these three groups a tax credit of up to 50 percent for donations of \$100 or more. Local entities must be approved by the Department of Social Services, and a procedure has been put into place

by the Department of Revenue for processing the tax credit request.

The actual percentage will depend upon the amount of credits available in a given year. However, donors can reapply for up to five years for any portion of the credit that was not available at the time of application.

I designed the legislation so that each of the three groups would have equal portions of the available tax credits. If any entity does not use its portion, the remaining tax credits would then be available to the other organizations.

I would especially like to thank Barbara Brown, Judy Doverspike, Jack Hadsall, Sandy Howard, Jay Wood and Rebecca Gordon of Missouri Kids First, Beth Dessem, executive director of the statewide CASA organization, and many members of the Springfield Junior League for their involvement in making this legislation a reality.

Contact one of our local organizations to find out how your donation can impact our local kids!



Governor Blunt, seated, signs Senate Bill 1229 by Sen. Champion relating to "Children in Crisis" tax credits.

Too often legislation is passed in Jefferson City that makes us wonder "What did it really accomplish?" I thought you might like an update on some of my legislation from past sessions to see what has occurred.

Missouri State Name Change (2005)

- Missouri State officials say more out-of-state and graduate students have expressed interest in enrolling, the applicant pools for open positions have been larger and stronger, and developing leadership at the national and international levels has been easier.
- Noticeable acceptance of new name by General Assembly
- Board of Governors now reflects statewide presence

Meth Reduction Initiative (2005)

- In less than a year, there is an average of 46 percent reduction in lab seizures.

Return of Sex Offender Photographs to the Internet (2005)

- Completed – See www.greenecountymmo.org

Removal of Mercury from Childhood Immunizations (2005)

- Slated to take effect on April 1, 2007

Foster Care Reform (2004)

- Independent "Office of Child Advocate" established
- Timelier child-welfare court hearings implemented
- Searches now conducted for full orders of protection and fingerprint checks for all adults in foster homes
- Children in subsidized guardianships have increased from fewer than 500 in 2000 to over 2,500 in 2005.

Performance-Based Budgeting (2003)

- Pertinent data is now available for the governor and General Assembly to use in budget decisions.
- Every department is now submitting performance measures and baseline data.
- House and Senate appropriations staff evaluate certain program measures annually.

Whatever
happened
to...?



For the past two years, I have been actively involved in securing funding for an expanded Missouri Highway Patrol state crime lab in Springfield. This has certainly been a cooperative effort; Congressman Blunt has secured funding for equipment and training, the city of Springfield has worked on a facility, and the state has provided the funding for additional staff. Bill Marbaker, assistant director of the Crime Laboratory Division of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, responded to questions relating to this expansion:

Explain the current structure of state crime labs.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol crime lab system consists of six laboratories including Jefferson City and Springfield. The Jefferson City lab is referred to as a full-service crime lab, offering forensic science services in the areas of controlled substance identification, toxicology, DNA, trace evidence, latent fingerprints, and firearms/toolmarks.

What are the current capabilities in the Springfield lab?

The Springfield lab, like our other satellite labs, is presently a limited-service lab providing services in the areas of controlled substance identification and blood alcohol analysis. All other evidence must be relayed to the lab in Jefferson City. The Springfield lab is staffed by five criminalists (forensic scientists), one full-time evidence clerk and two part-time evidence clerks.

Describe the expansion of the Springfield lab.

The staffing of the new full-service Springfield lab will take place in three phases. Over the course of three years, we plan to hire and train 21 additional employees for the Springfield laboratory.

Phase One: Implement a full toxicology section and increase the staff for controlled substance identification.

Phase Two: Add DNA analysis and trace evidence.

Phase Three: Add firearms/toolmarks and latent fingerprints.

Describe the current Springfield lab and the proposed full-service lab?

Currently, the crime lab has only 1,700 square feet and has other limitations due to the fact that it was not originally designed to be a lab. We have simply outgrown the facility and cannot add any additional equipment or staff due to space limitations.

The new state-of-the-art, full-service crime lab will be in a building owned by the City of Springfield located in an unoccupied industrial complex that will eventually become a police/fire department training center and law enforcement resource facility once renovations are complete.

Why is the expansion of the Springfield lab critical to Southwest Missouri as well as to the entire state?

With Southwest Missouri being one of the fastest growing areas in the state, the need for forensic science services in the criminal justice system has also increased. The area needs an expanded crime-lab facility that can offer the forensic specialties that are currently lacking in the region.

Over the past five years, the caseload in Springfield has increased an average of 9.2 percent each year. This trend is expected to continue into the future. Due to the limited size and scope of the present lab, there exists a large backlog of cases awaiting analysis. The delays caused by this backlog present serious problems for law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and judges.

Along with the growth in caseloads at the Springfield lab has come a corresponding increase in cases requiring other forensic analysis such as toxicology, DNA, trace evidence, firearms identification and latent fingerprints. Since the present lab does not have the staff or capability to perform these tests, this evidence must be transferred to the Jefferson City lab. This has resulted in increased workloads and backlogs there as well. Many of these cases go to trial. When that happens, the criminalists from Jefferson City must travel to the southwest Missouri area to testify in court. This occurs frequently, often several times a week. The extra hours the criminalists spend traveling across the state to court results in less time spent in the lab working on other cases.

A full-service crime lab in Springfield will allow us to address these case backlog issues. Criminalists will be available locally to testify at trial, which will allow us to respond quickly to a court request. In addition, we will have scientists in all forensic specialty areas available locally to provide immediate and direct assistance to local law enforcement agencies involved in crime scene investigations.

A full-service lab in Springfield will also provide critical backup to the services at the General Headquarters lab in the event of a terrorism act or a natural disaster. With approximately 20,000 criminal cases from nearly 500 law enforcement agencies last year, if the General Headquarters lab were shut down for any reason, it would devastate the criminal investigation ability of Missouri law enforcement. An expanded Springfield lab will allow for these services to continue if such an unfortunate event were to take place.

Keeping our children **SAFE**

With the passage of HB 1698, the Legislature empowered Missouri to better prevent sexual predators from harming Missouri children.

The main provisions of the bill are:

Mandatory Prison Sentences

Those convicted of forcible rape or sodomy of a child under the age of 12 will be sentenced to life in prison and must serve at least 30 years before they will be considered for parole.

Sexual Assault by a Teacher

The crime of sexual contact with a student has been expanded to include a student teacher, employee of the school, volunteer or a person employed by a contractor providing services to the school.

Cyber-Crimes Unit

To track down cyber predators who use the anonymity of the Internet to lure children, this provision authorizes the creation of a panel to distribute grants to law enforcement task forces to patrol online social networks and chat rooms.

Sexual Trafficking of a Child

Those found guilty of sexual trafficking of a child younger than 12 years of age will face a felony punishable by life in prison without eligibility for parole for 25 years.



SOURCE: Missouri Department of Corrections




Protecting **PROPERTY RIGHTS**

Eminent domain laws allow governments to condemn and buy out private property for “public use” as long as just compensation is paid. The laws were established so that projects such as building government facilities or making improvements to public infrastructure could revitalize struggling areas.

The U.S. Supreme Court last year ruled that governments can seize private property for economic purposes, such as increasing the tax base and providing more jobs.

In response to this ruling, the Missouri General Assembly passed HB 1944 to help protect landowners.

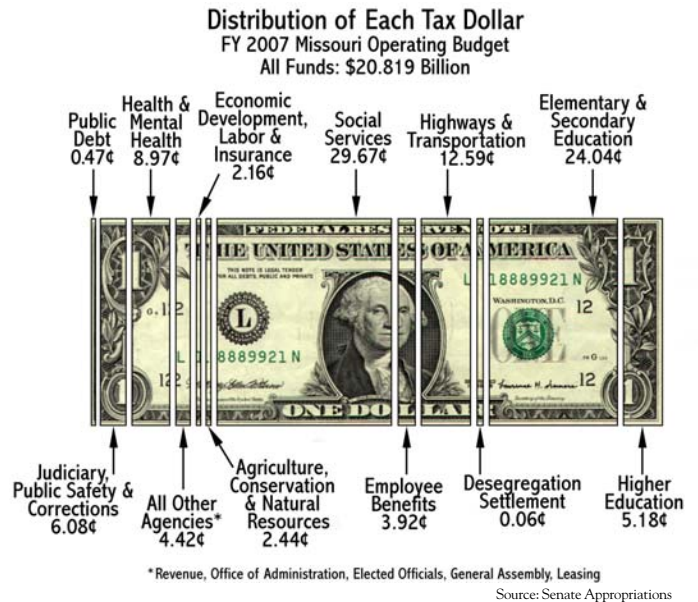
The Eminent Domain Reform Bill:

-  Prohibits eminent domain from being used in projects solely for purposes of economic development.
-  Prevents farmland from being designated as “blighted” for eminent domain purposes.
-  Ensures that when eminent domain is used for traditional public use, compensation will be based on several factors including: heritage value, fair-market value, willingness of the owner to sell the property and the costs of relocation and replacement.

Missouri's 2006-2007 Spending Plan

As a four-year member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I spent countless hours in hearings and discussions relating to our state budget. Record funding for Springfield public schools and Missouri State University are at the top of the list. However, I am pleased that I was able to specifically secure new or additional funding for the following uses:

\$626,000	Expansion of Springfield Crime Lab
\$ 75,000	Regional Arthritis Centers
\$400,000	Home Health Monitoring for Chronic Care
\$150,000	Jordan Valley Innovation Center Operations
\$250,000	Springfield Public Transportation
\$250,000	Springfield Crisis Nursery



Senator Champion's Gubernatorial Appointees

Thomas J. Carlson

Member, Health and Education Facilities Authority of the State of Missouri

Samuel M. "Sam" Coryell

Member, Advisory Committee for 911 Service Oversight

David H. Jones

Member, Missouri Southern State University Board of Governors

Peggy Kubicek

Member, County Employees Retirement Fund

Mary K. Meek

Member, Missouri Training and Employment Council

Rick J. Muenks

Member, Missouri Real Estate Appraisers Commission

Barbara K. Tiedt

Member, State Lottery Commission



Senator Norma Champion expresses her strong support for Springfield Mayor Thomas J. Carlson's appointment to a state board.



Ensuring Respect, Dignity and Peace

Sometimes the Missouri Legislature must quickly respond to unbelievable situations. Edward Lee Myers, a specialist with the U.S. Army, was killed last year in Iraq. As you may have heard, an out-of-state group has been picketing funerals for some time. Their recent efforts have expanded as they have now focused on the funerals of those who have given their lives for our freedom. In any scenario, the burial of a loved one should be respected. Therefore, the Legislature quickly passed SB 578, which includes the following provisions:

- Makes it illegal to picket or protest one hour prior to or one hour after a funeral service.
- Violation is a Class B misdemeanor offense.
- A repeat violation is a Class A misdemeanor offense.

Lights! Camera! Springfield!

Robert K. Gilmore, former professor at Missouri State University, wrote a book several years ago with the intriguing title, "Ozark Baptizings, Hangings, and Other Diversions: Theatrical Folkways of Rural Missouri, 1885-1910." Obviously, any society seeks a way to interact socially, and in 2006 we are no different. Hopefully we still have frequent baptizings, no hangings, and an even greater array of social diversions than our forefathers and mothers.

When I was appointed to the Missouri Film Commission more than three years ago, I readily saw the potential that exists in Missouri for expanded filmmaking opportunities. Too often, the glamour of Hollywood clouds our understanding of this art form. Many times, we think of "art" as a luxury or an "extra."

Two years ago, I was approached by individuals who were concerned because we did not have a local film presence. Since then, I have been excited to see the overwhelming response that resulted in a vibrant organization, the Missouri Film Alliance of Springfield.

In addition, I was pleased when Greg Steinhoff, the director of the Missouri Department of Economic Development, named one of our local residents as the chair of the Missouri Film Commission. Mark Biggs, who teaches filmmaking at Missouri State University, has infused new energy into the commission, and I am anticipating great strides statewide relating to filmmaking and economic development. I would also like to commend Scott Arthur Allen and William Brandon Bowman for their contributions locally.

The arts provide much more to Missouri than just the strong cultural component which it possesses. The arts can also have a tremendous impact on the local economy. In addition to the obvious link found in Branson, downtown Springfield is a wonderful example of how the arts have impacted economic development.

Stroll through an art gallery or enjoy a downtown restaurant on a "First Friday," and you will see the economic development of the arts in our city.

When art galleries and performance venues abound, they spin off many other businesses, and now we are seeing a huge housing expansion in this revitalized area of our city.

As your state senator, I have also been pleased to work with Missouri State University in securing ongoing funding for the annual Missouri Fine Arts Academy, which is held each summer on the campus. The best of our young artists, musicians and dancers receive further training as they explore career and educational opportunities. Julie Bloodworth, of Missouri State University and director of the academy, is to be commended for her investment in the education of these young people.

Many local artists and philanthropists have helped Springfield create a vibrant arts community. Their economic impact cannot be minimized, and I am grateful for their ongoing contributions.



The Springfield Little Theater received an award for "Organization of the Year" by the Missouri Arts Council.



I'm reminded of a lawmaker who received a call from a constituent who requested that legislation be drafted to minimize the amount of ice placed in soda cups at fast food restaurants. This is an example of what we **don't** need state government to do for us. We are constantly challenged as to whether solving every problem is the role of state government or whether it is an issue of personal responsibility.

Challenges for Missouri's Senior Citizens

Every time I visit my mother in St. Louis, I am reminded of the challenges that today's seniors face. Housing, personal care, health matters and pharmaceuticals are just some of the issues that confront this important population.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, of the 245 cities of over 100,000 in population, the city of Springfield is ranked 24th in percentage of adults over the age of 65. When looking at senior populations of those over the age of 85, Springfield escalates to the 8th position.



To me, this indicates our need to focus on how we serve this community. In recent years, Springfield voters dedicated funds toward senior service projects. In addition, we have the Southwest Missouri Office on Aging (SWMOA), which so capably serves our seniors.

SWMOA Executive Director Dorothy Knowles and her team provide information and access to many services, such as the tremendous job they did in assisting with the implementation of the new federal pharmaceutical program, Medicare Part D. The SWMOA office has produced a resource guide that is free and available at many locations in Springfield. It can also be obtained by contacting them directly.

As the chair of the senate committee that handles senior issues, I dealt with many significant bills this year, such as Senate Bill 616, which improved access to assisted living.

For seniors, there is a need for choices of care, and affordable personal health services. As your senator, I am working to improve access and conditions for independent living, assisted living and long-term care. Seniors, I encourage you to seek out the services available here in Springfield. In addition to the Office on Aging, I have included contact information on the three senior centers located in Springfield.

Senior Contacts

SW Missouri Office on Aging
1735 South Fort Avenue
862-0762
www.swmoa.com

Stillwell Satellite Center
525 S. Campbell St. #109
862-4371

Northview Leisure Center
301 E. Talmage
864-8606

South Side Senior Center
2215 S. Fremont
890-1313

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